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UNION
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Surveys and Smokers

The findings of the survey that will be launched this fall by the U. S. Public Health Service to determine the effects of smoking and air pollution on health should have the ring of authority. But it seems reasonable to wonder whether the nagging questions in the American smoker's mind will be answered in full — and how he will react if they are answered.

Dr. Luther L. Terry, surgeon general, has the delicate chore of selecting a 12-member study committee from a list of 150 scientists prepared by the Public Health Service and representatives of several federal agencies, medical groups and the tobacco industry. The committee, with Dr. Terry or someone designated by him as chairman, will conduct a study that could have an unprecedented bearing on the economy and the personal habits of the population. The study will have two phases — the nature and magnitude of the health hazards, expected to take about six months for completion; and recommendations for action, for which no estimate of required time has been made. The committee members, who are to turn out papers relating to smoking and air pollution effects in particular diseases, will represent all the pertinent areas of medical science.

The study could have a spectacularly depressing effect on the nation's tobacco industry, which does an estimated annual business of \$8 billion. If such a bastion of the economy were to shrivel, the weakening influence would be widespread. The suppliers and servicers of such a vast operation, as well as their employees and those of the tobacco firms themselves, would be casualties. The stock market would be shaken to its foundations, and the impact would probably be felt worldwide. But it would take more than certain findings by the study group to wreak such damage. The smoking public would have to react emphatically to such findings — much more so than in the case of past pronouncements by the Public Health Service.

The ultimate effect of the survey, then, would appear to rest first on the findings themselves and then on the manner in which the American public responds to them. It may well be that the survey will come up with nothing more than guarded observations, limited by wide variances in medical opinion. Even if it offered clear-cut evidence that smoking was a major hazard to health, the effect might not be pronounced. For human nature finds it easy to rationalize its own weaknesses.

OKLAHOMAN
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
August 4, 1962

The Mountain Labors

FROM the federal public health service comes word of another pending study concerning the possible harmful effects of smoking. The first phase of the study will consist of defining the nature and magnitude of the problem. This will take an estimated six months. Thereafter a second phase will include the preparation of recommendations for action. No estimates are available concerning how long this will take. Nor is it yet apparent how long the government will need to persuade the public to give up smoking if that is the recommended course.

DISPATCH
Henderson, N.C.
July 28, 1962

Tobacco's Destiny

President Kennedy has ordered a study to determine the relation of tobacco to disease, meaning chiefly lung cancer and heart ailments. Government experts who will make the study are not expected to be ready with their conclusions before the middle of next year, but their findings will carry considerable weight.

A factor which cannot be overlooked in the investigation is the tremendous stake government has in the tobacco industry by reason of the taxes it receives from that source. The Federal government alone last year took just under two billion dollars from such excises, and the State reaped a harvest right at one billion dollars in the aggregate. That is, of course, a minor consideration if it shall be established that tobacco constitutes a substantial health hazard. First consideration always is the wellbeing of humans.

Foes of tobacco, and of cigarettes in particular, have in recent years carried on a relentless campaign against smoking. Tobacco interests have consistently maintained that findings have been largely statistical rather than biological. But the fight goes on apace.

President Kennedy's intervention follows similar action in Great Britain, which has had a deterrent influence upon consumption there. It has seemed not to reflect noticeably in the United States. That could be different, though, if government studies here should go against tobacco.

Whatever the outcome, the industry will come up with its own answer by way of making consumption safer. The investment is too great, all the way from producer to consumer, to permit billions of dollars to go down the drain because of this or any other potential setback that might occur.

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